



REACH

REVIEW OF THE EDMONTON ATARI COMPUTER HOBBYISTS

NO. 24 FREE

EDITION #1

PRICE: \$1.00



EDMONTON ATARI
COMPUTER USERS GROUP



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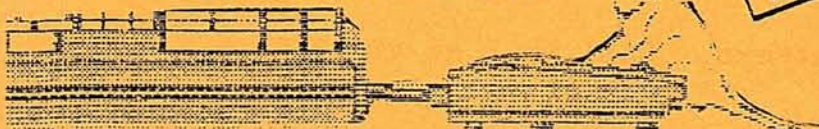
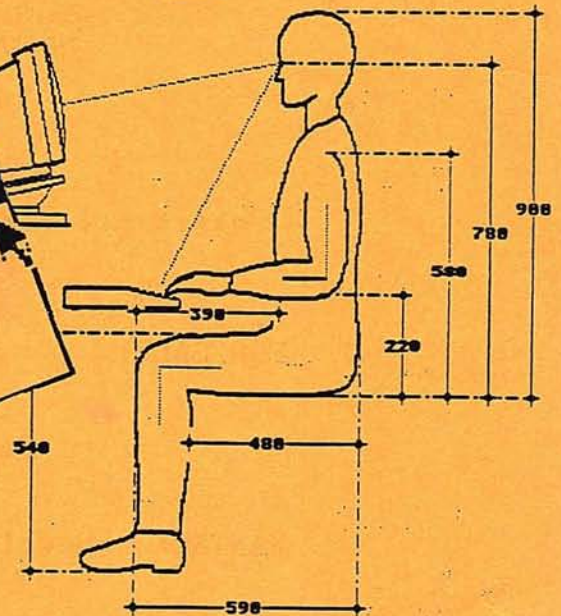
Edmonton Atari Computer Enthusiasts
Meet on the first Tuesday of E.A.C.H. month, at St. Joseph High School, 109
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E.A.C.H.
EDMONTON ATARI COMPUTER HOBBYISTS

Newsletter

E.A.C.H. is an independent non-profit society formed to provide information and support to the Atari users of Edmonton and area. The club meets at 7:15 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month, in room U116 of the Central Services Building at NAIT. See the map on the inside back cover for details.

Articles and inquiries pertaining to this newsletter may be sent to:

R.E.A.C.H.
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Membership fees are \$24 a year for the first two months of the year and are thereafter charged at a rate of \$2 for each month remaining in the year. The membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Students are charged only 1/2 of the regular rates. To join the group, or for more information on becoming a member, call Maurice Hilarius at 431-0671 or write to him at:

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REACHING OUT

Welcome back, programs! Remember to set your multiple shields on high to protect your optical sensors from this amazing colour.

Obviously, one of my headlines for the April Fool's issue should have been "AMAZING DEGENERATIVE DISEASE STRIKES EXEC MEMBERS! Scientists ask, CAN THEY BE SAVED?" However, this is no joke. In case you haven't heard (or haven't yet read Doug's article), Mike Brown is resigning as Vice-President and Peter Braun is resigning as ST-Librarian. This means that at about the halfway point of the year, four out of the ten execs who started the year will have disappeared into a swirling vortex of infinity somewhere along the line. Doug regularly begins the executive meetings now with "OK, so who's gonna resign this month?"

All joking aside, this is quite a loss for the club. Mike Brown has served as vice-prez since mid-1983. That's four years - four years of hours and hours per month discussing business, setting policies, writing articles, working on club finances, helping collate the newsletter. Mike has been a consistent contributor to the newsletter and a constant help at the collating meetings (I hope this is one thing that doesn't change), and has provided much valuable discussion at exec meetings. He's also been the bylaw man of the club, providing wording for our bylaws and so on, as well as helping out various and sundry presidents at the meetings, selling disks, picking up ads and so on. The loss of Mike means that I'll be the only exec member left with only an 8-bit system - boy, it's gonna be lonely. Oh well, maybe taking time off from EACH will enable him to get those addled cranial circuits of his repaired. (See REACH #7 and #8 for details). In any case, thanks are long overdue to this incredibly dedicated individual. So, without more ado... thanks for doing all you've done, Mike, and I hope we haven't seen the last of you. You'll be missed.

As for Peter... unlike Mike, it

seems he won't be sticking around here in River City, opting out for the heavenly skies of Lotus-Land. A quote seems appropriate here:

"... In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seem-ed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem."

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson
The Lotus-Eaters

Are you sure you know what you're getting into, Peter? Besides, this means we won't be able to nominate you for something next December!

Again, more seriously, Peter will also be sorely missed. He came on-line as an exec in mid-1985, having previously assisted then-librarian Dan Eckert with the library (8-bit, of course. No ST's then, kiddies!). As SysOp, Peter slaved away trying to make the EACH BBS the best possible. He struggled with Bulletin Board Construction Set at all hours of the day and night, revealing his inner characteristics: the strength of Hercules, the stamina of Atlas! But when the ST came along, his enduring love for the 8-bit and especially BBCS died a natural death and he was catapulted into the exciting world of mice and write-protect tabs that you don't have to peel off and stick on. From there, it was a short step to ST public domain software librarian in January. (Actually, Peter has been working on the ST PD library since last year sometime, but the position wasn't formalized until January). What else? Oh yes, Peter has also been busy helping out with the newsletter since time immemorial, helping Rick print it on that 20-year-old Gestetner we're all so proud of, and

REACHING OUT

FROM THE PREZ...

religiously helping out with the collating too (actually, it is almost religious... there's this collating cult, see...). And Peter has always contributed to exec discussions with calm, level-headed comments that leave most of us wondering "hey, now why didn't we think of that?" (No, don't answer that!) So, what can I say? Thanks for all you've done for the club, Peter; have fun in Vancouver; and stay away from those two litre jugs of Jolt Cola (ever heard of OD's?).

WHAT ELSE?

Oh yes... some members came forward to help collate the newsletter, but I'm always looking for more... as of this writing, DAVE MITCHELL, RICK SLANSKY, RAE THOM, and KEVIN WHITHAM have expressed interest in helping out. Many thanks, guys...

Other areas of the newsletter I would like to see more input in... cover illustrations. I would really like to be at least one month ahead in terms of covers, so that there's no last-minute scrambles. I've been putting them together myself for the last few months, but I'm sure there must be a few more artistic types out there somewhere... I would prefer a hardcopy, but you could also put it on the BBS (leave a message for me) and I'll get someone with an ST to download it for me. Thanks.

I'm also looking for articles... 8-bit articles especially, but any kind will do. Beginner tutorial articles are one idea... if you're into soapboxes, I could also see fit to publish editorials and so on. Talk to me.

In the excuses department... last month's newsletters were mailed rather incredibly late due to a mix-up with the mailing list and my having a hard time making it to the post office. It won't happen again (or have I said that before?).

Until next time... OM, OM!

-Phil

Last January, in my first letter as President, I mentioned how much things were changing both in the Atari community and in our club. Well, here it is June already and things are still changing.

First of all, I would like to say farewell to Adrian Ashley who has now retired as our 8-Bit Librarian. He did a splendid job for two years and deserves our thanks and admiration for a job very well done. When we say good-bye to the old, though, we also get to say hello to the new. I would like to welcome, on behalf of both the executive and the club, George Kosowan to the executive as our new 8-Bit Librarian. Even though he has a tough job ahead of him maintaining and continuing to build a tremendously huge library, he shows both the willingness and desire to take on the position and all of its responsibilities.

At this time I also have to say good-bye to two more people who collectively have probably done more for the club than all the rest of us combined.

As anyone who attended the June meeting now knows, Mike Brown has resigned his position as Vice-President of the group. Over the four and a half years that Mike has held the position, he has been very active in almost every aspect of the club, including helping with the libraries when needed, working extensively with the newsletter, helping with the financial records of the club and, most importantly, becoming involved with most of the decisions within the executive. His input on all subjects was both asked for and appreciated by past and present executives. I know personally how seriously he took the responsibilities of his position and how much personal sacrifice he put into that responsibility. It will be a great loss for us, but, in order to be true to himself and to the club, he has decided that since he cannot maintain the level of commitment that he has in the past due to other obligations, he would resign.

FROM THE PREZ...

Mike, on behalf of both the club and the executive, I would like to thank you for the years that you have given to us as Vice-President and would like to let you know that any continued input that you can give to the club would be both welcomed and appreciated.

The next great loss that we are facing is that Peter Braun is resigning as 16-Bit Librarian. He has accepted an advancement with his career and will be moving to Vancouver very shortly. Peter joined the executive over two years ago as SysOp of the club's BBS and worked hard to make it one of the most respectable in the city. This year he has managed to build our ST Library into one of the most prestigious sources of public domain software in the Atari community. He has also put in many hours helping with the newsletter, making a sometimes impossible job both possible and rewarding. His personal commitment to all aspects of the club has been total and we will all miss his humour and steadiness of character that we have become so used to having. Peter, once again, on behalf of both the club and the executive, I would like to thank you for all that you have done to make this club better and wish you all the best in your new position and new home. I would also advise any Atari group in the Vancouver area to try and recruit you into their group, since I am sure that they would also benefit from your input.

The next and probably the most extensive change that the group as a whole will notice is the new format for the monthly meetings. Over the past couple of months, the business aspects of the meetings have been fading out and more and more time is being given to personal contact. This month we are trying a more open and varied meeting format with which more members can get more from each meeting. Two or more machines of each type are being brought to this meeting, and more public, non-regulated demos will be shown. The machines will also be more accessible to the members as a whole so that if they

have anything new that they want to show or talk about, they are welcome to do so.

The tutorial format is also being changed with a lot more emphasis on helping each other. With those that want to learn more about their systems helping each other, it is hoped that this more personal approach will encourage more discussion and more varied topics in the tutorials. There will always be more advanced members available, but the class itself will instigate both the discussions and possible solutions to a problem. A number of these going on at any given time will hopefully involve more levels of programming and be more beneficial to a larger body of the members.

I hope that this approach to the meetings starts to catch on and that more and more people start to become involved. In order for this type of meeting to succeed, it will be necessary for members to start to bring a machine every so often, a piece of software that they think is worth showing off (be it commercial or something that they wrote themselves), and most importantly, a whole lot of enthusiasm.

Another major change is that from now on, an area will be set up at the meetings for the trading and selling of hardware and software. Now if you have something that you want to sell, or see something that you want to buy, you'll have the chance at all of our meetings.

When I first looked into joining EACH, my primary reason was to meet other people who owned Atari computers, learn from them, and hopefully tell other people about what I knew. As well as all this, I wanted primarily to have fun. Most of these changes are really old ideas reborn. The club, however, has gone through a lot of growing pains and has learned a lot from all it's trials. Now it is time to settle down again and get back into the real purpose of why we play with our computers so much:

TO HAVE FUN!

Doug Primeau

AUTODUEL

Autoduel (8-bit)
Origin Systems Inc.

Review by The Cimmerian.

It was early morning and I was on my way to Philadelphia from New York. I had just got the 'cargo', as the man from the AADA called it; I called it snakes. I hate snakes. Anyways, the cargo had to get to the pet shop by tomorrow, so I was in a bit of a rush.

The day was nice and I watched the farms as they passed at a steady pace, while listening to the whine of the four electric engines that kept the needle pointing at the 80mph mark. That's when it happened. A high pitched beep and a dot on the radar told me another car was approaching; it was when the other two appeared that I thought, "this is where I earn the pay".

I armed the front mounted recoilless rifle and put my finger on the trigger. The first was a bike, too fast for me to outmaneuver, so I set out a trail of spikes that ended the life of the bike's tires and it's rider. Then came a truck straight for me - I jammed on the binders, got out of the way, then accelerated with a quick right turn and took out the back armor. The truck burst into flames. "So much for salvage on that one," I thought. The last was a car that had a good bead on me while I was playing with the truck; it proceeded to take out a tire, sending me into the wall. My computer said that the rear armour and rear left tire were gone, and the spike dropper was damaged. The car must have had a rookie in it because he drove around to take a look at what seemed to be a kill and was really only a scratch. I targeted his left door and shot until I got through and took out his right door.

Fans of the game Car Wars will be happy to know that a computer version is now out for the 8-bit Atari. It consists of two disks, three sides. It is very much like the game and quite good, but is missing some things from the board game which I will talk about later on in the review.

If you have never played the game Car Wars, it takes place on the highways and in the arenas in the year 2030. Gasoline has run out, causing the government system to collapse to a more decentralized form of government. The freeways are the homes of

outlaw gangs that make a living off of other travelers, and the most popular sport is autodueling. New technology for cars includes electric engines that can propel vehicles up to 90mph, plastic armour for all vehicles, and every kind of weapon from lasers to oil jets.

You start the game off by distributing 50 points between your three abilities of driving, marksmanship, and mechanic skills. Driving Skill helps you to keep control of the car, so if you are hit or if you do some quick maneuvering you can stay in control. Marksmanship Skill makes your hits more likely and they do more damage. Mechanic Skill gives you the ability to salvage ammo or parts off of other cars that you have put out of commission. Each skill goes up the more you use them, until they reach 99. The higher the skill number, the more it will help you; so if your marksmanship skill is 05 you may only do 1 point of damage whereas if it is 75 you may do 8 points.

The game starts with you in New York where you can start off at amateur night and make some money (if you win); then you can buy a vehicle that you design, and either continue in the arena or you can go to the AADA office and get a courier job to try your luck out on the highways.

The advantages of the game are:

- It is very much like the original Car Wars board game.
- The computer keeps track of the game's time and date.
- When building a car the computer keeps track of weight, cost, and spaces.
- There is an extensive map of the places you can go.

The disadvantages are:

- It seems very hard to have enough money, and you never seem to have enough to repair your car completely.
- Unlike the board game, there are no links for firing more than one weapon at a time, and there are no turrets. Where you put the weapon is the direction it will fire.
- The car is awkward to control. Instead of accelerating when you push forward, stopping when you pull back, and turning left and right correspondingly, it travels in the direction that the stick is pushed.

Overall, it is very good game although it's quite hard to master. I hope you have as much fun and as much frustration as I had playing it.

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IAN'S QUEST II

(WITH APOLOGIES TO ST-LOG'S IAN CHADWICK)

By Ian Johnstone (in Toronto)

Recently (in other words, the day after I got to Toronto), I attended a meeting of the Toronto Atari Federation (TAF). Hopefully, I can remove some rumours about new Atari products; specifically, the new Mega machines, a couple of upgrades, and some other neat gadgets.

At the May TAF meeting, someone from Atari Canada (unfortunately, I didn't get his name) presented a prototype of the new Mega-ST, a four-meg version. This version did not include a blitter chip, but he says it will be released for the Mega's, 520's and 1040's at the same time.

Basically, the 4-Meg version is no different in operating style than the 1040. It does not include a 68020 as I had hoped. The TT attachment won't be out for a while, because Atari is holding off on R&D for the next while. I did not get a release date for the TT, but I suspect (pure guess) that it will be at least six months beyond the release date of the Mega's, maybe longer - nobody seems to know or even wants to speculate on that point. It seems Atari does not want to create a whole bunch of incompatible machines. Right now it is a problem for us monochrome users who can't play those great colour games. But imagine buying a piece of software that says "4 Meg, Blitter, math co-processor, sound chips, hard-drive required." Although this is the extreme, you can see the point.

The features of the machine I saw: most noticeable is the detachable keyboard, enhanced and with built in keyclick. I am not sure whether the keyclick is optional or not. The open architecture seems to me to be just open space on the main board; however, I am not a hardware man so I am not sure. Basically, you can plug in your enhanced graphics (higher resolution, more colors), blitter, sound chips and so on. There is a pull-out board that enables you to add up to 7 more boards.

The redesigned system now has all of the guts of the machine in another box, which also holds the disk drive. The setup looks very close to an Amiga; I pity the future computer users who see the Amiga first, then the Atari and think to themselves "a clone" and go for the Amiga.

The new hard drive is redesigned to fit under the main unit, and the monitor sits on

top. Very professional looking. You are now able to daisy-chain up to 7 drives, which I think could also be hard drives, I am not sure.

With the release of the Mega's, there will be a new set of ROMs with some, and underline the word SOME, GEM fixes. One problem that still exists is the 40-folder limit. Don't expect these changes until a new enhanced version of GEM is released. That's right, new version. The rumour about the death of DRI at the hands of Microsoft Windows just doesn't seem to hold water here. One fix to GEM sees a new disk format which uses the twister format to increase I/O time, but still uses the microsoft format of 9 sectors and 80 tracks.

There is still a physical limit of 6 desk accessories with the new version; however, a new program called DESKCARD allows you to select an accessory menu from the main accessory menu that will give you up to 32 additional accessories.

As for price, this is hard to say since actual prices have not been set. One of the problems is the cost of Meg-Chips. There will only be two machines released, the 2 and 4 meg versions. The price for a 2 meg monochrome version is about \$2200. If you wish to expand later in the future, it's no problem to slap in more memory chips, all the way up to a 4 meg machine. Nobody seems to want to take a guess at the cost of a 4 Meg machine, because of the cost of the chips, but someone mentioned that it might be as high as \$4500 for a monochrome system. They want to be able to sell a 2-meg mono version with a laser printer for under \$5000.

Other goodies... there is a new black box (available in about one month) that will enable you to use a color TV with old-style ST's and 1040's. It works in monochrome or colour and gives Analog or RGB output, with apparently excellent resolution. It will cost about \$100 CDN. To get more information, contact JMG Compushoppe in Hamilton, ON [(416) 675-3200]. They will be bringing them into the country.

We also had a demonstration of the new version of CAD-3D (V2.0). The cost is about \$110 CDN and upgrades will be about \$30 CDN. This program has apparently been completely redesigned (to what extent I am not sure, as I have not seen the old version of the program). Nevertheless, the demonstration

IAN'S QUEST II

EACH.ARC

is very impressive. If I was an artist, I'm sure I would go out and buy this program. One problem: you require at least one Meg, either a 1040 or a 520 with a 1 meg upgrade.

The demonstration was given by Allan Page, who is the co-author of FLASH (the terminal program). You can do many things in CAD-3D, which is now a complete GEM based application. Everything in the program is object oriented. Apparently, you can not digitize things, which could potentially cause some pain for animators (see below).

You have several methods available to create objects. One way is to draw the appropriate shape in 2D, then bring the object out to form a 3D image. Or you could draw the shape of the object and rotate it producing another shape. If you wanted to produce, for instance, the letter A, you would first draw the outside lines of A, expand it, draw the inside lines of A, that being a cube shape, subtract the cube from the outside drawing of A... and a letter is produced. You can add objects together to produce a bulging effect, subtract them, as above, or intersect them at appropriate points. There are several pre-programmed objects that you can use.

Allan showed us a picture of CAD and 3D where 3D sat above (Z) and below (Y) the acronym CAD.... You can show the picture on the edit page or on a full color page in two ways - either as a wire frame, or with hidden lines removed. You can also rotate the picture or parts of the picture through all three planes, set colours of planes, set your lighting (up to 3 bulbs). The list goes on and on.

But the most impressive aspect of CAD-3D is it's ability to animate. There are two ways to animate, either frame by frame or through an 'about to be released' version of an animation language which is similar to BASIC. The images are stored on disk, and played back on the screen. With the new Mega-ST's, the number of storable objects and the capabilities of this package could make it very interesting for graphic artists (watch out, a new breed of TRON movies are coming...)

Speaking of Allan Page, I asked him if a new version of FLASH will include an IF structure. He replied, "no, we are basically re-writing the entire program to incorporate new and better ideas."

by the Editor

As you may have noticed, this month's cover is filled with images... from the past. Yes, this is it - the 24th issue of REACH! And before that, 12 issues of the E.A.C.H. newsletter! All told, 36 astounding issues! This would be three years if the newsletter had been published monthly, but the first Edmonton Atari Computer Users Group newsletter (before we were E.A.C.H.) goes back to about November, 1982. The first issue of REACH was published circa April, 1985. Rather than choose between these conflicting dates, I decided to opt for anniversary issues every 12 issues... so this is our 2nd (or 3rd) anniversary. Confusing, I know...

In any case, I decided to reprint some stuff from EACUG #1 for this special anniversary. (For more of the history of EACH, check out ROOTS in REACH #9.) Those of you who were there - read and remember. And those of you who weren't - read and learn.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Hello, fellow Atarians! My name is Donald, your president and helper. It is very exciting to have this first issue of the Edmonton User Group newsletter possible through the efforts of many kind contributors.

The group got started about a year and a half ago to promote Atari computer users' knowledge and education. There was no formal organization as I did as much of the work as I could. The user base was still small until first Computerland opened, then Continental Computers started selling the Atari. We had our meetings at Continental for most of the time. There were about 7 or 8 people at each of the meetings then and now with the coming of more dealers (Computer Cottage, The Bay, Consumers Distributing, Hi-Fi Express, West World, and Electro-T's) the user base is slowly expanding.

I hope to keep this an honest group

EACH.ARC

with integrity and openness. Your help is needed to make it grow. This point cannot be stressed enough!

Some of the group objectives will be to:

- a) hold regular meetings
- b) present speakers
- c) answer members' questions
- d) show members' projects
- e) offer tutorials or courses
- f) maintain a software library
- g) have found bylaws
- h) publish a continuing newsletter
- i) evaluate products
- j) arrange group purchases and discounts
- k) participate in computer shows

The regular meetings will be interesting, active, and fun. Active members may present anything they want within reason. Please keep your articles or columns coming as the more you put into it the greater the issues and group will be. 'Til next time, goodbye!

DON

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Hello,

Welcome to the EDMONTON ATARI COMPUTER USER'S GROUP first newsletter.

It was a little more than a month ago Don Mah gathered a bunch of us together to help give him a hand in regrouping the USERS' GROUP. At that time he asked me if I would be interested in setting up a form of newsletter that would be sold, subscribed to and supplied to group members. So, thinking what potential this kind of circular would have with Atari users in the Edmonton and surrounding areas, I agreed to give it a try.

We established a form of the newsletter to begin with and began to work with what we thought might interest the readers within the club. We are going to be using our own computers, printers and software to get things rolling with the first newsletters. After the group gets on its feet financially we hope to be using a system

that the group owns.

By the end of this newsletter you will have a basic idea of what potential this newsletter has in future issues. This is why this newsletter, like the GROUP needs group support.

The newsletters in the future will have reviews of software, hardware, books, and magazines as well as club news and rumours of ATARI related subjects. We will also try to answer any problems and questions that you might have pertaining to your software, hardware and computer languages that you are working with.

We hope to be working with members of the group, as well as other USERS' GROUPS and programmers so as to be able to answer any of your inquiries.

Again, I would like to welcome you to this newsletter. I also welcome any praise or criticism as well as any columns or reviews that you might have in regards with this newsletter or the USERS' GROUP in general. Any kind of individual or group input will only benefit this letter and group in the long run. This is your newsletter. Please support it!! THANKS

MARLOWE

POEM

I'VE LOST MY HUSBAND, OH WHERE CAN HE BE?
WITH HIS NEW LOVE, I FEAR IS HE.
I SWOON HIM AND CROON HIM, I JUST CAN'T
COMPETE
I FEAR HE'S BEEN SWEEPED, RIGHT OFF HIS
FEET.
I HAVE LOTS OF UNDERSTANDING AND A SMILE
ON MY LIP.
BUT I CAN'T FACE THE FACT I'VE BEEN
DUMPED FOR A CHIP!
WHEN WE WERE FIRST MARRIED, MY EYES WERE
ALL STARRY
BUT THIS LOVE LIGHT IS GONE, THANKS TO
ATARI!!!

ANONYMOUS



For Grads & Dads

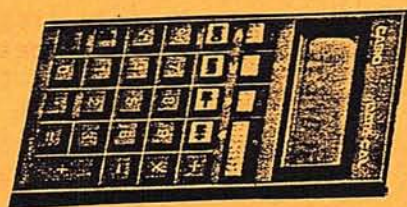
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ATARI PULLS ST FROM THE MARKET

This article is reprinted from the (May?) issue of RUNES, the newsletter of the Midwest Atari Group, Iowa Chapter (M.A.G.I.C.) and is itself a reprint from the April LA-ACE newsletter. I sincerely hope I'm not breaking the reprint conditions of either MAGIC or LA-ACE, but I considered this article both timely and of great importance. -Phil)

by Ray Maynard - LA-ACE

How would you like to see the above headline in InfoWorld or Byte? That eventuality may be closer than you think, and you and I are the only people who can do anything about it.

This came to my attention while perusing the ATARI16 SIG on CompuServe recently. I came across a "thread" of messages exchanged among some very prominent writers of Atari software and what they had to say sent a chill through me.

Let me pose this question to you: Where do you get your software?

"Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends."

-John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Living "in the sticks" as I do, I haven't the close contact with the ST user community that many of you have. Isolated as I am, I came to really believe that the stealing of software (let's call it what it is) was not nearly the problem that it is/was in the 8-bit world (and I'm talking about ALL computers... not just 8-bit Ataris). Based on the messages I saw, I must sadly conclude that I was mistaken.

With all due apologies to CompuServe, allow me to quote some of the messages that I'm referring to. I have omitted the names of the individuals involved since some of the messages include or allude to marketing plans of well-known companies. However, I will say that Ian Chadwick ("Mapping the Atari"), Tom Hudson (DEGAS, DEGAS Elite, CAD-3D) and Alan Page (FLASH) are just a few of those involved. Read on.

"I hope for your sake that you are correct in your thinking or you'll be

filing for bankruptcy! - But, can you see yourself asking \$500 or more, even for an ultimate WP/Desktop Publishing program, in the ST market?"

"... The answer is both "yes" and "no." You can't push a mass-marketed software package for the ST at that price, but it is possible to go for limited vertical market sales at \$500 or even higher... After all, a "lot" of people have bought the Apple Desktop Publishing System (Mac-Plus, Laserwriter-Plus, and Pagemaker) bundled together for a hefty sum."

"I agree on the vertical market. You're safe as I believe you said you were doing your work with IBM GEM so you have a huge base of machines there. Consider your market if it was ST ONLY. How many copies of a \$500 program would you sell there?"

"At the current rate of piracy, no matter what the program sold for, the pirates would be at it. I think it has a lot more to do with the cost of the hardware than the software. You don't see a lot of 1-2-3s being passed around, but we see a lot of (brand name omitted) stuff at less than \$100. Methinks it's time to go in for heavy duty protection schemes in order to save us all from the Coco Syndrome."

"God, I am sorry to hear that! I really hoped that the "grand experiment" would fly! Alas, it appears it won't and that all those of us who bought hard disks must suffer from the greed of a few cheap idiots and their myriad good-buddies."

"We were naive to believe that if the prices were brought within nickels of the cost we could compete with fools who will properly value their time at pennies an hour and steal the unprotected software! Oh, well. Pirates 1000, honest computer users 0, 4th and 100 with 30 seconds left to play. Sigh."

"I think that hardware copy protection is the only way. Copy-protected disks are not the answer. Especially with the number of HDs that are being used. It is really sad that people pirate so much. I got in a 1040 the other day. Wouldn't load someone's copy of a friend's VIP. Sad world."

"Back to the point, I think that a

ATARI PULLS ST FROM THE MARKET

hardware solution would be the best, but how do you get all of the software companies to agree to a standard? Even I could do a hardware "key" that would be hard to break. But then pirates would break the code that looked to the hardware. Sigh again..."

"The only good thing about the ST software market is that really big companies like Borland, Lotus, and Microsoft (with the exception of Word) are not in it. That makes it easier for small operators to put out software, though nobody is making megabucks."

"I don't know where this thread started, but the software companies are starting to recognize the amount of software piracy on the ST. I am a dealer, and have received calls from two companies inquiring about ST sales, and why they have not been what they should have been."

"Actually, the cost has a lot less to do with it than you think. A high cost deters a group from getting together and pitching in to get a copy for their own BBS... something which is happening with frightening frequency right now. Several BI programs are on the pirate circuit - along with Michtron, Antic, Softlogik, and so on. It has a LOT more to do with the cost of the machine than the software. I've never encountered a pirate 1-2-3 on a BBS, although I've been offered a pirated VIP for the ST..."

"Personally, I have been given to believe protection is the only way to go, along with an indispensable manual. Otherwise, the picture for continued ST software looks bleak. We can make a LOT more money and risk a lot lower chance of piracy doing MAC programs (unprotected). Of course, this is my opinion, but I'll add that several people inhouse have an even MORE radical approach to the ST market."

"My suggestion if you want to see us and everyone else in this business is to call the FBI when you find a pirate BBS or a store or individual pirating software. The alternative is to have the ST go the way of the Coco; the piracy level was so high that the publishers just stopped completely and it dried up virtually overnight. The same is true with the Atari 8-bit; no one's doing much more than

a few games because they know it's not worth the investment. Have you got a better suggestion?"

"Well, if our sales figures and research are worth anything, the outlook for ST software sales is a lot more dismal than we imagined. I've been informed of a dozen pirate BBS's operating apparently quite openly and stocked with 40 megabytes or so each of pirate software - Time Bandits, DEGAS Elite, CAD-3D, FLASH, games, applications and so on... not a very promising future. We've gone the route with others to close some down but more keep appearing. What's the answer?"

"Protection is one; not an easy one to take after all we've said against it but maybe that will save the ST segment of our development team... people are greedy; they want free software, so they take it. I was in a public forum as a guest speaker about piracy and one person (an older one, mind you) told me it was his RIGHT to pirate software because any attempt to stop him or to protect the programs was an infringement on the freedom of ideas and information. Get that? How do you argue against someone fired up with that nonsense?"

"It's a sad story. I fear the ST will go the way of the Coco with such a piracy level right now. Me, I think I'll get an IBM..."

There you have it. These are some of the biggest names in the ST software business and they are ALL down on the Atari market.

We've had members complain in our meetings that there's no new 8-bit software (and they're right). If this keeps up, we'll soon have the same complaint about ST software. AND WE'RE DOING IT TO OURSELVES! Please, people, get the message. It will soon be too late and you too will have an "orphan" computer.

"Try to see it my way. Do I have to keep on talking 'til I can't go on? While I see it your way. Run the risk of knowing that our love will soon be gone."

-John Lennon and Paul McCartney



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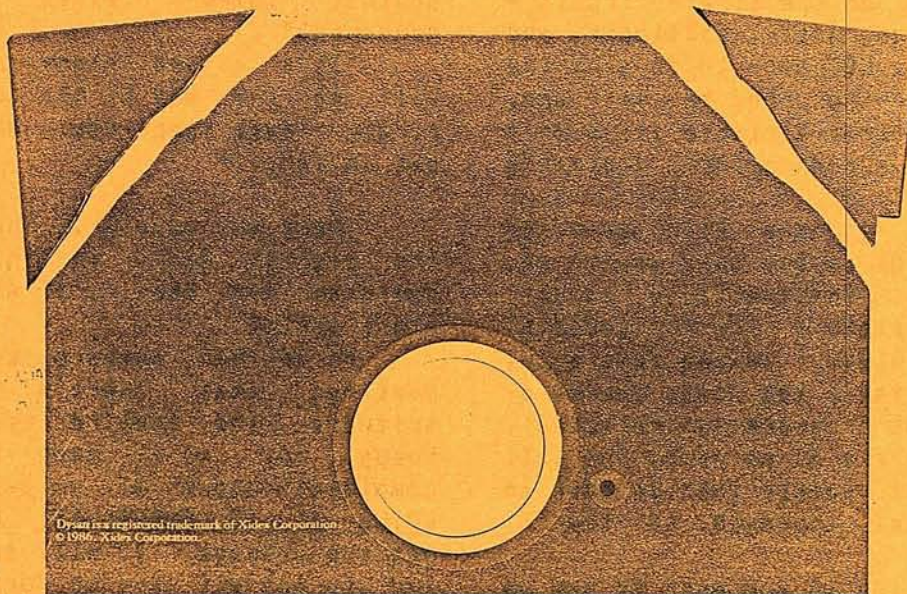
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ST TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Reviews by Kar Loepelmann

ST-Talk

Quantum Microsystems, Inc.

ST-Talk is an introductory telecommunications software package that is available bundled with some modems like Anchor Automation's Volks VM520. It is also available by itself.

The first thing you will notice about ST-Talk is its low price. Don't let the price fool you; this program fits in nicely with Atari's low-price-for-quality-merchandise philosophy. For your money you will receive ST-Talk and all related support programs along with a high-quality public domain ramdisk desk accessory. The ramdisk was a nice surprise, showing QMI's classiness and consideration for the consumer.

When you run the program, the first thing ST-Talk wants from you is the time and the date. If you don't want to enter the exact time, you can just hit the return key twice, setting the time to the ST's current internal time and date. I found this to be a minor, yet annoying chore to perform every time the program is executed. It is especially bothersome if you own a clock card.

If you're expecting to find the GEM pointer to appear when you take your mouse for a little roll around its pad, you're going to be disappointed. Yes, put your mouse into hibernation because this program is reminiscent of many IBM programs in its extensive use of function keys and ALTERNATE-key combinations. Don't despair, however; ST-Talk is one of very few programs to use the HELP key. After pressing HELP, you are presented with one screen filled with ST-Talk's command summary. To answer your next question: yes. Yes, ST-Talk's command summary fills up only one page. Users new to the bewildering world of telecommunications will find these 19 commands more than enough, but experienced users will eventually find these few commands insufficient. The commands include: toggle capture to disk file (a good idea when you select a file on a ramdisk); upload (send) text; Xmodem send and receive; set baud rate; set time

of day (Yeah, right! I want to set the time AGAIN! Grr!); call up dialing menu; toggle tone/pulse dial; along with other minor or cosmetic functions. All users of the University of Alberta's MTS system via modem should be happy to note that ST-Talk is capable of sending a "break" signal, the equivalent of hitting the BREAK key that interrupts program execution on the AJ-510 terminals. A couple of other functions worth noting are: access to some DOS functions (8-bit deja vu!) and a toggle Atari/XE mode, which allows you to translate ATASCII characters and access 8-bit-only bulletin board systems. QMI sure has their fingers on the pulse of the Atari community, realizing that many ST users owned Atari 8-bit computers first.

ST-Talk comes with a small, yet informative printed manual, and also contains more extensive documentation on disk. ST-Talk's ease of use, low price, and bug-free operation make it the perfect choice for anyone starting telecommunications, or the casual user. Unlike some software, it really works "as advertised," and works well. Version 1.2 allows macro commands, auto-logout, and customized menus. While this makes it more appealing to more knowledgeable users, new users may require more work in order to become accustomed to ST-Talk. Thoughtfully, QMI has come up with ST-Talk Version 2.0 which uses the GEM/mouse-based interface. This version has the same functions as version 1.2, but also offers key redefinition and additional terminal modes. It will be a bit more expensive. Even with all these added features, though, ST-Talk is not comprehensive or flexible enough for the professional user who uses telecommunications software on a daily basis.

Flash

Antic Software

Flash is an extremely powerful, error-free telecommunications tool that accepts commands in no less than three ways. It sets the standard by which all future t/c software will be judged.

ST TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Flash probably has every feature you ever wanted. Let's look at Flash to see that I'm not overstating the case.

Flash uses a two-screen / two-mode system. The terminal mode screen is the one you will use during most of your online session. GEM's mouse pointer is used very infrequently here, but for good reason. If you're online, chances are very good that you'll have your hands on the keyboard most of the time. Who wants to move their hands to grab a mouse, then go back to the keyboard? By pressing INSERT, you enter the Status line near the bottom of the screen. Here you can use the two-letter abbreviations of Flash's 69 command language (believe me, it IS a language in itself!). While in terminal mode, you also have the choice of using a mnemonic ALTERNATE-key combination to access Flash's commands, ala ST-Talk. The function keys are also user-definable. Flash allows you to create a mini-program using its command language, and then call it up using the function keys. Talk about flexibility! Flash has a combination clock/timer that you can set if you really want to.

The second screen is the capture buffer. Unlike ST-Talk, all text from the terminal mode is captured to this second screen. The capture buffer is a familiar GEM window, allowing access to desk accessories and Flash's commands via mouse control and drop-down menus. This screen has been touted as a "mini word processor." You can delete and review text from your online session as well as enter new text, move and copy text, and also search for case-insensitive strings. Since it doesn't have any facilities for formatting, don't expect to be doing any major document editing using this capture buffer. Nonetheless, having captured text just a mouse-click or keypress away is a dream come true!

Flash has three terminal emulation modes: ANSI (VT-100 emulation), Atari mode (VT-52 emulation), and Vidtex mode. The most interesting of these is the Vidtex mode. With Vidtex, you can read CompuServe's 'RLE' graphics format pictures. Although the pictures are only in black-and-white, it adds another dimension be able to download pictures

created on other computers like Apples, IBM PC's, etc. To save a picture on the screen, you simply press the INSERT key, and the screen will be saved as a DEGAS format picture. For colour monitors, Flash saves the pictures as low resolution (.PI1) pictures (due to the odd rectangular shape of the pixels in medium resolution), while for monochrome, it saves a high-res (.PI3) picture. If you don't own DEGAS, don't worry. Antic Software was thoughtful enough to include their GRAFCON picture-format conversion utility on the disk.

Flash offers extensive file transfer protocols. ASCII DC2/DC4 protocols are available, as well as Xmodem's Cyclical Redundancy Check (CRC), and Checksum (CHK). You don't need to know the type of transfer the transmitting computer is using for downloads, since Flash will test first for CRC. If the sender is using CHK, Flash will switch. Since most users don't know the difference between these two Xmodem types, Flash's intelligence will make file transfers painless. Xmodem's block size is also selectable; from 128 bytes, to 1 Kbyte. Add to this a choice between loose and tight Xmodem timing values and the only thing preventing a perfect file transfer is bad phone lines (and don't we all know what that's like?).

You may have heard of Flash's famous "DO" files by now. This feature will make Flash extremely attractive to professional users. A "DO" file is "...a simple text file..." (HA! It's more like a program in itself!) created by the user from Flash's command language that is executed when dialing a number, or even from the GEM desktop. The text file has .DO for its extension, hence the name "DO" file. A DO file can be called up through the Dial Directory, when dialing a number. If a name in your Flash Dial Directory is followed by an "@" symbol and a DO filename, the DO file will begin execution when a connection is established. If you select document type of .DO for FLASH.PRg under Install Application of the Options drop-down menu from the desktop, Flash (version 1.1 or later) will load and execute any .DO file you double-click. The only limit to the

ST TELECOMM.

HIGH ROLLER

DO files is your imagination. For example, it can call and sign on to an information service or bulletin board, automatically entering your passwords. If you are a student regularly using your university's online service, or a professional logging onto an information service daily, Flash's DO files will relieve the monotony of signing on and make your task much easier.

Flash not only has user-definable function keys and DO files, but also a translation table for added flexibility. The translation table allows you to filter incoming and outgoing characters, and specify which characters will replace them. The only use I have found for this function is for interfacing with non-standard (non-ASCII) computers (like the Atari 8-bits). Flash allows you to save each different translation table to disk, letting you have several different tables on the same disk. It loads the default table when booting. Flash handles the dial directory and function keys in the same manner.

Flash comes with Antic's GRAFCON program as mentioned, as well as a LOT of documentation on disk, including details about new versions of Flash not included in the manual. You'll also get sample .DO files, UNIX information, and information on CompuServe's VidTex service. The manual, written by the authors of the program (Canadians Joe Chiazzese and Alan Page) with Ian Chadwick is comprehensive, and includes a very thorough reference guide containing Flash's entire command language.

To sum up, Flash may be a bit too heavy for the new user, but for people who need to use a telecommunications program on a daily basis, it will provide everything you require. The user-definable function keys and .DO files (not to mention Flash's extensive command language) give Flash an easy versatility and flexibility that has yet to be matched in the same price range. To use Flash just on weekends to call up the local BBS will make that task easy and fun, but will waste Flash's enormous power and flexibility.

(By the way, this review was submitted via the BEACH using Flash.)

by David Seale

What, another Harrier flying game for the ST? Great minds think alike and fools seldom differ. Let's see which is the case with this program.

Of course, I was referring to "Harrier Strike Mission" above, and anyone who has purchased it will not want to purchase "High Roller", right? Well, we'll see.

As the last remaining "High Roller" (you love to take risks) after saboteurs destroyed your squadron, it is up to you to destroy the enemy terrorists' headquarters in "a" neighboring country (sounds like Libya to me). It will not be easy as there are 512 sectors in the "playfield", each with many SAM missile sites, tanks, and MIG-23 aircraft. You have four bases which you may move as you advance toward the target. So much for the storyline, now let's see how well it works.

First, the Harrier simulation. The aircraft is a breeze to fly in basic maneuvers. Good thing, too, when you consider the threats that are thrown at you. You can vector thrust at 0, 45, or 90 degrees. You have throttle, brakes (for ground use only), rudder control, landing gear, flaps, and can use a joystick or the keyboard to control the aircraft. You must watch the fuel level and your speed - too fast in certain situations and the aircraft will start to vibrate and will break up. The simulation flies as if controlled by a flight computer (as a Harrier is), so to roll you just hold the joystick to one side. To climb pull back, etc. Very simple. You must watch the instruments, however, as you can damage the aircraft in some situations. You can climb vertically if you like, do inside and outside loops (watch your speed), and practice the basic dogfight maneuvers. I have not yet seen it fall backwards when it should but this is the only error I've detected.

While flying is easy, keeping track of your attack/defensive weaponry is not so simple. You carry three bombs, two sidewinders, and 250 rounds of cannon

HIGH ROLLER

shell. You also have 9 dispensers each of flares and chaff packs. There is a HUD (head's up display) showing altitude above ground, compass heading, pitch, vertical speed, air speed, and roll/gunsight indicator. By pressing keys you change the weapon selected, to be fired with the joystick button or space bar. For bombing you have a projected point of impact bar and for missiles a locking system. The gunsight turns red when a target is in it. You also have FOFTRAC, an imaginary target mapping system, and two radar systems. And if that doesn't keep you busy, you can look out the window at the scenery!

Well, the hardware is excellent, but what's it like to play? First, let me tell you there are three "types" of play: practice (they don't shoot back), combat practice (they shoot back but you don't die), and combat. There are also three levels of play: pilot, commander, and ace. My first sortie out in combat as a pilot, the lowest combat level, didn't last long. Sort of brings up the saying "when you're up to your shorts in alligators, it's hard to remember the object was to drain the swamp!". This is not a criticism, just a warning. Oh, the practice mode is fun, although at first I died regularly there too (gear must be down when landing - picky, picky). Combat practice is harrowing (or Harriering?) as they keep launching missiles at you (you are started at 15000 ft. chasing MIGs). Missiles are hard to evade when you are trying to fly and operate all the other controls too - maybe after MUCH more practice?

This program beats others in several areas. First, the graphics are excellent. Filled with colour, the bushes, mountains, enemy tanks, missile launchers, and MIGs all look almost real. The MIGs look especially great, which made me not want to shoot them, just fly along and look. Another good feature is the size of the playing field. You don't get bored attacking the same targets every time. It's also more realistic as you can be killed so easily. And there is so much to keep track of. You must move your bases, protect them from tanks,

refuel and rearm, and generally plan your course of action. Oh, by the way, did I mention the enemy gets better as you approach their HQ?

As a flight simulation the program falls a little short. It's too easy! A Harrier must be much more difficult than this to fly. On the positive side, the simulation is quite complete. In Commander and Ace levels you can black out from positive "G" force and "red out" from negative "G" force (blood rushing to your head). I also enjoyed performing acrobatics not possible in "Flight Simulator II". Jet fighters are powerful aircraft!

Well, maybe I can knock the manual. They give you a card showing the keyboard controls, the cockpit instruments, and the playfield. This card is specific to the STs. You also get a 32 page manual, which is used for all machines the program is converted for. Almost half the manual is devoted to attack/defence techniques! Hey, they even use real tactical jargon! I found everything I needed to know when I finally broke down and read it. It's laid out very well, with instrument, weapons, and tactics sections. It takes a while to learn the jargon (at least for a non-military type like me), but it all makes sense. There is a good index, and a flight training section as well.

So what does the program lack? Well, there is no "save game" feature, and in a game this big and complex it's certainly needed. There also appears to be some kind of bug, which appears after playing in the practice mode for twenty minutes or so. The program seems to jump you into combat mode or something.

The program consists of two disks, but you only leave the second one in the drive to run. It's copy protected and only runs on the colour monitor with either a 520 or 1040.

Recommended for all war mongers and shoot-'em-up types. Who knows, the ease of dying may convince them of the insanity of these actions. As far as High Roller is concerned, though, bring 'em on!

THE MAP

NAIT

ROOM
U116

Enter
Here

(P)

PRINCESSES

ELIZABETH

106 STREET

118 AVE

Meetings begin at 7:15 PM on the
first Tuesday of E.A.C.H. Month.

ST SIG meetings in A121 on the
following Wednesday.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

ST SIG MEETING: June 10

The next meeting of the ST Special Interest Group will be held Wednesday, June 20 at 7:00 in room A121 of the Central Services Building at NAIT (see map on inside back cover). Call Lawrence Rozak (462-1526) or Keven Whitham (456-0077) for more details.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: June 17

Please get your articles or advertisements to the editor before June 17. Get with the action - write an article! Upload your article to the BBS, mail it to the address on the inside front cover, or give the editor a call (Phil, 477-3671).

GENERAL MEETING: July 7

The next general meeting of the Edmonton Atari Computer Hobbyists is July 7 at 7:15 p.m. in room U116 of the Central Services Building at NAIT (see map on inside back cover). Bring your computer or your latest software goodie - make this and every meeting one to remember! (No pirating, natch.) See you there!

REACH
6220 - 111 Ave.
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